

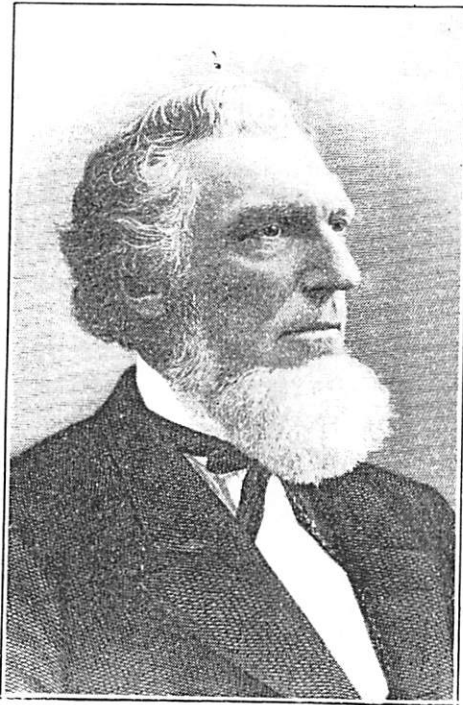
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XIV.

THE ECHO CANYON WAR.

1857-1858.

Johnston's Army.—The Army for Utah was now approaching the eastern border of the Territory. Its progress, since leaving Fort Leavenworth, had been in the main satisfactory. True, the Cheyenne Indians had raided the cattle herds, running off eight hundred beeves, and killing one of the



GENERAL WELLS.

nineteen drovers; but the army itself had suffered no misfortune. The weather had been pleasant, and everything seemed propitious for the expedition.

After passing the Rocky Mountains, however, there was a radical change. The experience of the troops was then one continuous disaster. Frost and fire combined against them. Johnston's campaign in Utah, except that no fighting took place, repeated on a small scale Napoleon's campaign in Russia.

The Utah Militia.—The commander of the Expedition had been warned by his superiors to "anticipate resistance, general, organized, and formidable." The anticipation was fully realized. Since 1852

Utah had been divided into military districts, most of them corresponding to the several counties of the Territory, and laws had been enacted for the further organization of the militia, still known by its reminiscent title, "The Nauvoo Legion." In the spring of 1857 the Territory had been redistricted, and eight days after Governor Young learned of the coming of the army, General Wells issued instructions to the district commanders, requiring them to hold their forces in readiness to march at short notice, and to make all needful preparations for a winter campaign. The Legion then numbered a little over six thousand men, about one-third of whom took the field. From early in August warlike preparations went forward, until the militia were ready to meet those whom they regarded as foes and invaders.

Leaving most of his men in camp, the General, with a light escort, went on to Fort Bridger. He had previously ordered Colonel N. V. Jones, with the main body, to do all in his power to render the canyon impassable, by digging trenches and building dams, that it might be flooded; and by constructing breastworks and piling boulders upon the heights, for use against the troops if they attempted to force a passage.

Colonel Burton's Recon-

noissance.—At Fort Bridger

General Wells met Colonel

Robert T. Burton who, with a

body of cavalry, had been

reconnoitering since the middle

of August. Two of his com-

mand, Briant Stringham and

N. V. Jones, had guided Cap-

tain Van Vleet to Salt Lake

City. Colonel Burton reported

the establishment of Camp

Winfield and the location of the

Government supply trains.

General Wells and Colonel

Alexander.—On the last day of

September General Wells sent

a communication to Colonel

Alexander, calling attention to

the fact that the latter had dis-

regarded the proclamation forbidding armed forces to enter

Utah, and directing him to retire, or else disarm his force and

deposit his arms and ammunition with Lewis Robison, Quar-

termaster-General of the Territory. Enclosed were copies of

the proclamation and a letter from Governor Young, stating

that if the troops fell short of provisions they would be fur-

nished on application. General Wells added that he and his

men were there to carry out the Governor's instructions.

Colonel Alexander answered courteously, stating that he

would submit the communication to the Commanding General

only to say that these troops are here by order of the President

of the United States, and their future movements will depend

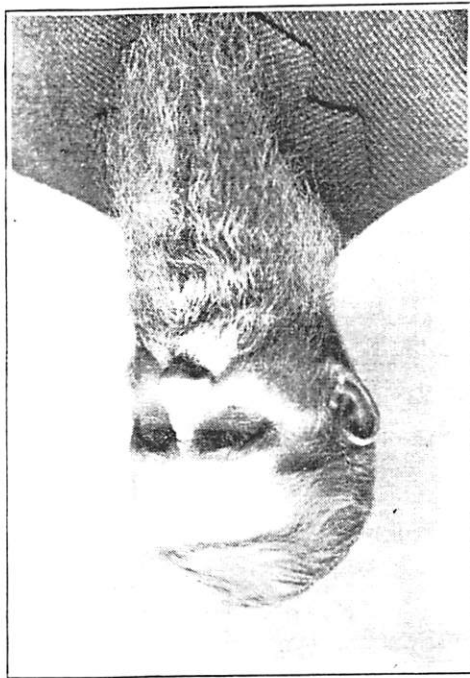
entirely upon orders issued by competent military authority.*

*Colonel Alexander addressed his communication to "Brigham

Young, Esq., Governor of Utah Territory." Governor Young had not

been officially notified of the appointment of his successor, nor had

that successor, Governor Cumming, qualified for the discharge of his



ROBERT T. BURTON.

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A Bloodless Campaign.—Such a reply was doubtless anticipated. An alternative plan of campaign had been matured in Salt Lake City before General Wells went to the front. Steps were now taken to convince the Government that the people of Utah were in earnest, and would not, without a struggle, permit the army to pass the Wasatch Mountains. At the same time it was determined to take no life, unless absolutely unavoidable, and orders to that effect were issued. Not even when fired upon by the Government troops, did the militia disregard these instructions.

Government Trains Burned.

—Upon the return of his messenger with Colonel Alexander's reply, General Wells ordered Major Lot Smith to turn back or burn the Government supply trains then on the way to Camp Winfield. On the night of the 3rd of October, Major Smith, at the head of forty-three mounted rangers, set out toward Green River, and after riding nearly all night came upon an ox train moving westward. The captain, a man named Rankin, was told that he must "head about" and go the other way. "Where's your authority?" demanded Rankin.

"Here's a part of it," answered Smith, pointing to the men behind him, "and the rest is out there in the brush." Rankin, after a strong protest, started eastward, but was met next day by Federal troops, who took out his lading, leaving the wagons and teams standing. Major Smith burned the next trains that he encountered—two commanded by Captain Dawson, and one by Captain Simpson. "For God's sake don't burn the trains!" pleaded Dawson. "It's for His sake that I'm going to burn them," said Smith, and forthwith the torch was applied. An Irishman called "Big Jim," the only non-"Mormon" among the rangers, was one of the torch wielders. Captain Simpson was out hunting cattle when the cavalry rode up and disarmed his teamsters. He was a brave man, and would have fought, had he not been at so great a disadvantage. Reluctantly he surrendered his pistols, and was allowed to keep two wagons loaded with provisions. The rangers helped themselves to



LOT SMITH.

similar reason, the Governor was treated to a display of expert horsemanship by George Bartholomew, a circus rider, who, with a trick pony, went through some wonderful performances, which were palmed off upon his Excellency as a sample of the ordinary evolutions of the militia cavalry.

A Cordial Reception.—Near the Warm Springs, Mayor Smoot and other municipal officers received Governor Cumming and conducted him to lodgings previously prepared for his accommodation. He was received into the hospitable home of William C. Staines, the Territorial Librarian. President Brigham Young called upon him, and during repeated interviews offered him "every facility that he might require

for the efficient performance of his administrative duties." Governor Cumming so stated in a letter to General Johnston, written ten days after leaving Camp Scott. In the same letter its writer said: "I have been everywhere recognized as Governor of Utah; and so far from having encountered insults or indignities, I am gratified in being able to state to you, that in passing through the settlements I have been universally greeted with such respectful attentions as are due to the representative authority of the United States in the Territory."



GOVERNOR CUMMING.

Records Found Intact.—

Governor Cumming, on the second day of May, sent a report to the Secretary of State, Lewis M. Cass, informing him

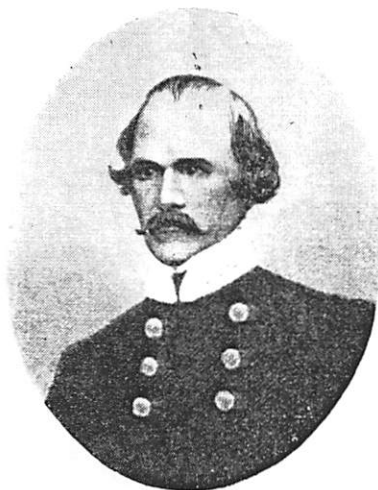
that he had examined the records of the Supreme Court and of the District Courts in Utah, and had found them "perfect and unimpaired." He also reported that the Legislative records and other books belonging to the Secretary of State were in perfect preservation, and that the Territorial Library had been kept by Mr. Staines in excellent condition.

And here the bubble burst! The "Gentile" Governor of Utah, in thus reporting the facts, gave a complete refutation of the flagrant falsehood invented by Judge Drummond and sworn to by Judge Stiles, charging that those records had been destroyed.

At the Tabernacle.—The same report described a Sabbath

nation coming to destroy this people, God Almighty being my helper, it shall not be."*

The Expedition and its Commander.—The Army for Utah, twenty-five hundred choice troops, splendidly officered and equipped, set out for the West in the summer of 1857. Their commander, Albert Sidney Johnston, was a brilliant soldier, who had been spoken of as the probable successor to the aged General Winfield Scott, Commander-in-Chief of the United States Army. When ordered to Utah, Johnston was a colonel of cavalry and pay-master in the military service. Later, he was made a brigadier general. The command



GENERAL JOHNSTON.

of the Expedition had first been given to General W. S. Harney, then in charge at Fort Leavenworth; but just before the time came to start he was ordered to remain in Kansas and operate for peace in that distracted State. Johnston received his appointment late in August, and immediately repaired to Fort Leavenworth.

The March Begins.—The vanguard of the troops, comprising eight companies of the Tenth Regiment and the entire Fifth Regiment of Infantry, under Colonel E. B. Alexander, moved westward on the

18th of July, and a few weeks later the two remaining companies of the Tenth Infantry, under Colonel C. F. Smith, followed. The artillery—Phelps' and Reno's batteries—went with the infantry. The cavalry, six companies of the Second Dragoons under Colonel Philip St. George Cooke, started on the 16th of September. This was the same Colonel Cooke who had commanded the Mormon Battalion in the Mexican War. With him traveled Governor Alfred Cumming and other recently-appointed Federal officers. General Johnston and staff, with a detachment of forty dragoons, in light spring wagons left the frontier post one day behind Colonel Cooke. Several large supply trains and herds of cattle for the army had been upon the plains since June or July. The expedition

*The Governor's apprehension of intended violence on the part of the Federal troops was partly based upon a widespread hostile sentiment, to the effect that the Utah Expedition ought to take possession of the "Mormon" country, kill or imprison the men, and confiscate the women. Ribald expressions to this effect were upon the lips of many of the soldiers and camp followers while on their march to the Territory.

Clerk Bolton's Denial.—As soon as the charges were published and the news could reach Salt Lake City, Curtis E. Bolton, Deputy Clerk of the United States Supreme Court of Utah, wrote to the Attorney-General over his official signature and seal, testifying that the records alleged to have been destroyed were safe in his keeping; and he offered to refute by records, dates, and facts, all that Judge Drummond had asserted.

Precipitate Action.—It was too late. The charges had been accepted as true. Before the Bolton letter could reach Washington, a new set of Federal officers had been appointed for Utah, and an army ordered to the Territory to assist them in maintaining the authority of the Federal Government.

The Magraw Letter.—The National Administration, in this rather hasty movement—for no investigation had preceded it—did not act solely upon the sensational story told by Judge Drummond. In October, 1856, W. M. F. Magraw, of Independence, Missouri, had written to President James Buchanan, representing that in Utah there was "left no vestige of law and order, no protection for life or property." He declared that the civil laws of the Territory were "overshadowed and neutralized by a so-styled ecclesiastical organization, as despotic, dangerous and damnable" as had ever been known to exist in any country, and which was ruining not only those who did not subscribe to their religious code, but was "driving the moderate and more orderly of the Mormon community to desperation." No class was exempt from outrage; all alike were "set upon by the self-constituted theocracy," whose "laws or conspiracies" were "framed in dark corners, promulgated from the stand of tabernacle or church, and executed at midnight or upon the highways by an organized band of bravos and assassins."*



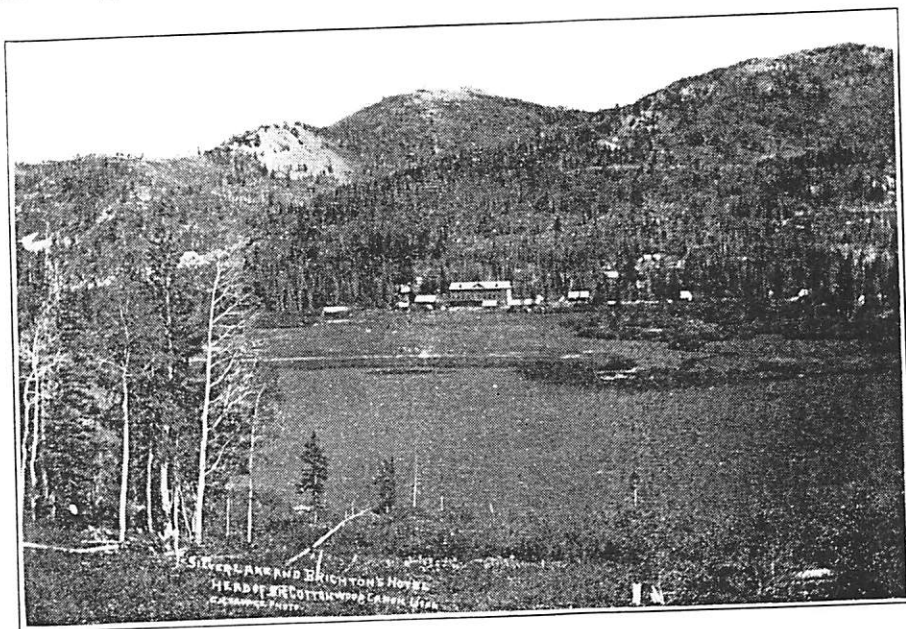
PRESIDENT BUCHANAN.

The Y. X. Company.—The writer of this inflammatory epistle posed as a personal friend to President Buchanan. He

*Allusion is here made to the fabled "Danite Band," which plays so prominent a part in most anti-"Mormon" writings. Dr. Sampson Avard, at Far West, Missouri, and John C. Bennett, at Nauvoo, Illinois, both excommunicated from the "Mormon" Church for various acts of wickedness, were the originators of this sensational slander.

outfits westward. The Mayor, to avoid excitement, at first proceeded leisurely, gathering up the property as he went. On the 17th of July he reached Fort Laramie, and from that point set out with all speed for Salt Lake City. The distance was over five hundred miles, but in a light spring wagon drawn by four fast horses, he and his companions, Judson L. Stoddard and Orrin Porter Rockwell, accomplished the journey in five days and three hours, arriving at their destination on the evening of July 23rd. The news they brought was delivered to Governor Young about mid-day of the 24th.

The Silver Lake Celebration.—It was the tenth anniversary of the arrival of the Pioneers in Salt Lake Valley, and the Governor, with about twenty-six hundred people, residents of the capital and neighboring settlements, were in the midst of a peaceful celebration of that event, when the word came that an army was marching to Utah to put down a rebellion against the Government. The celebration was held

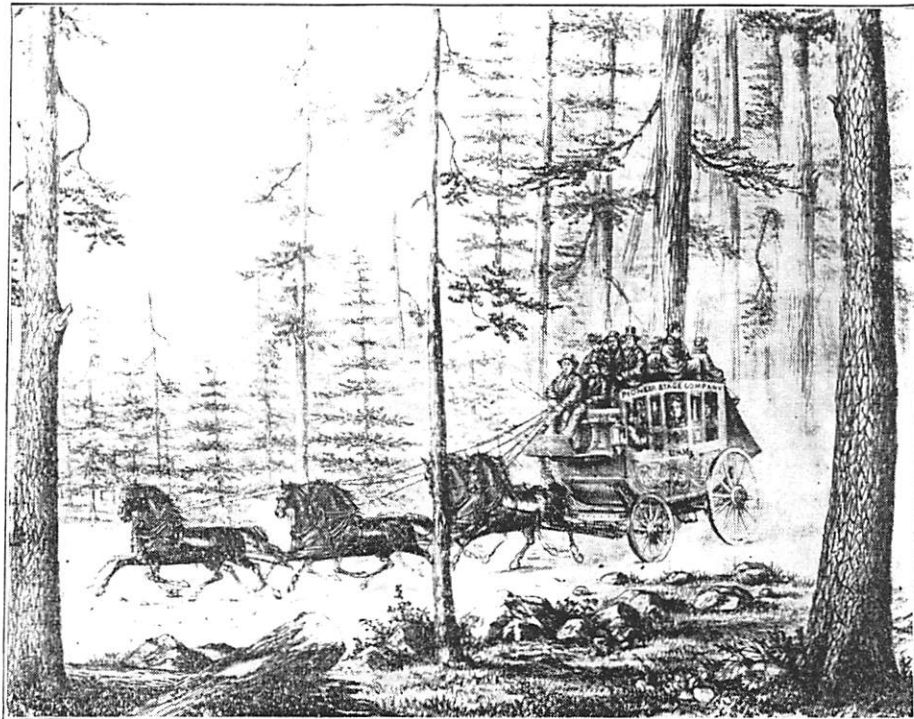


SILVER LAKE.

on the banks of Silver Lake, at the head of Big Cottonwood Canyon. From two lofty mountain peaks and some of the tallest trees surrounding the encampment, the Stars and Stripes had been unfurled, and early in the day the people had assembled in spacious boweries to be addressed by their leaders. Prayer was offered, the choir sang, bands played, cannon roared, and the military performed their evolutions. Dancing, boating, feasting, games, and other innocent amusements followed. All the day the festivities were at their height, four men

whose characters were not such as to render consistent any suggestion they might make for the correction of "Mormon" morals, soon dropped out of sight. Judge Cradlebaugh was next heard of in Carson Valley, having been appointed to the judicial district comprising that section, which, a few years later, was cut off from Utah and converted into the Territory of Nevada, with Cradlebaugh as its first Delegate in Congress.

Camp Floyd Indignant.—Camp Floyd seethed with indignation over the turn affairs had taken. At a mass meeting held there in July, 1859, an address was issued embodying a declaration that the "Mormons" were still disloyal, and that President Buchanan had done a great wrong in withdrawing



THE OVERLAND STAGE COACH.

from the courts the protecting power of the military. The agitation developed into a movement to have Governor Cumming put out of office; and the movement might have succeeded, through General Johnston's influence at Washington, but for a counter influence exerted by Colonel Thomas L. Kane.*

Horace Greeley in Utah.—In the summer of 1859 Horace

*About that time Colonel Kane delivered in the East a public address upon Utah affairs, in the course of which he eulogized Governor Cumming as the man of all men for the position he held. The address, widely published, made such an impression at Washington that the tide of sentiment was turned in favor of Utah's Executive.

Greeley, the founder and editor of the New York Tribune, arrived in the Territory. From the frontier the famous journalist had traveled westward by means of Ben Holladay's mail and passenger stage line, which was then running between St. Joseph, Missouri, and Sacramento, California, with Salt Lake City as a station on the route. The line had been established soon after the founding of Camp Floyd.* Mr. Greeley reached the Utah capital on the evening of July 10th, and remained a week or more, studying local conditions. During his stay he had several extended interviews with President Brigham Young. The New York editor was introduced to the "Mormon" leader by Delegate Bernhisel.†

"Two Hours with Brigham Young."—In his book entitled "An Overland Journey from New York to San Francisco"—a compilation of letters written by him to his paper—



LION HOUSE. PRESIDENT'S OFFICE. BEE HIVE HOUSE.

Mr. Greeley, under date of July 13, 1859, recounts his first interview with Brigham Young. Part of it follows:

"We were very cordially welcomed at the door by the President, who led us into the second-story parlor of the largest of his houses (he has three‡), where I was introduced to Heber C. Kimball, General

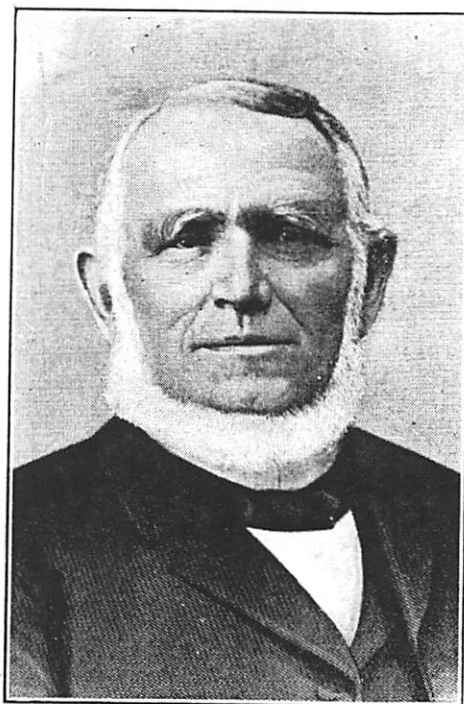
*Later, another line of stage coaches ran from Salt Lake City through Fillmore, Parowan, and Cedar City, to San Diego.

†Doctor Bernhisel, then nearing the close of his second term in Congress, was about to be succeeded by Captain William H. Hooper, elected Delegate in August, 1859. Hooper, during the Echo Canyon War period, had acted as Secretary of Utah pro tem.

‡The White House, the Lion House, and the Bee-Hive House, all three still standing (1916) on South Temple Street.

Little and Hanks.—Information respecting the Government's purpose to send troops to this Territory came to the ears of two Utah men, Feramorz Little and Ephraim Hanks, as early as February, 1857. Late that month they arrived with the mail at Independence, having crossed the plains under a special arrangement with the postmaster of Salt Lake City; Hockaday and Magraw having failed to properly close their contract. Through the non-arrival of the mails in Utah, Mr. Kimball had not learned, up to the time that Little and Hanks left home, of the acceptance of his bid by the Government. Immediately upon receipt of the notice, preparations to begin proceedings under the new contract were vigorously pushed; so much so that the establishment by the Express Company of a mail station on the Upper Platte was reported to the Government by Indian Agent Twiss, in the Deer Creek region, as a forceful "Mormon" invasion of the Sioux Indian reservation.

Mayor Smoot Brings the Tidings.—The news of the coming of the troops was brought to Utah by Abraham O. Smoot, Mayor of Salt Lake City. While in the East as an agent of the Y. X. Company, he learned from Feramorz Little at Fort Laramie, and afterwards at the office of a Government contractor in Kansas City, that Brigham Young had been superseded as Governor; that a new set of Federal officers had been appointed for the Territory; and that an army would accompany them to the Utah capital. He also ascertained that certain freight wagons belonging to Contractor William H. Russell, and which he had encountered on the plains, were loaded with army supplies, a portion of the equipment of the Expedition.



MAYOR SMOOT

These reports were confirmed at Independence, where the postmaster refused to deliver the mails for the West, stating that he was acting under orders from Washington.

Accepting this statement as conclusive, Mayor Smoot and Nicholas Groesbeck, the latter in charge of the Y. X. Company's business at the eastern end of the route, decided to break up the recently established mail stations and move the